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EDITORIALS

The First Line Seems Weak

Now that we are looking ahead to another period of wholly cold warfare, the importance of our first line of defense is heightened.

The first line is a hidden line — intelligence. That includes a spy system to collect information about the enemy, an analytical establishment to evaluate the collections of spies and "listening posts", and a counter-spy system to burst cogs in the enemy's intelligence apparatus. It also has to do with propaganda — a field in which we have not been at all adept, according to recent examinations of the "Voice of America".

It has been suggested for some time that the entire United States intelligence effort is a poor one. If so, that could explain why we have been at a prolonged disadvantage in maintaining certain inner defenses. Witness the theft of atomic data and the moves in the Korean conflict, where the losses have been mostly ours.

In a recent magazine article, Rear Admiral Ellis M. Zacharias, former deputy director of Naval Intelligence, said in effect that the Reds were having all the best of it in the "cloak and dagger" business. He is in a position to know. And Allen Dulles, new head of the Central Intelligence Agency, has hinted broadly that more support of, and emphasis on, his department is essential or we will continue to lose ground in a cold war.

An estimated 15 different intelligence agencies are working for the U. S. Some of them are said to be in competition with each other as well as with the enemy. That, of course, is one reason for an apparent overall weakness. It calls for co-ordination and unification of effort.

There are no statistics available to evaluate fairly the total expense of maintaining so many information collection agencies. But we know the cost is great. And while the U. S. spent freely on a multiple spy system, the Soviets gathered all of our atomic bomb secrets for a small sum — figured by some experts at about \$5,000.

Our most publicized intelligence "boner" was accomplished in connection with Red Chinese intervention in the Korean War. It has been established that confidential reports on the possibilities of the move by the People's Army were sent to Washington months before the event. General MacArthur said on November 4 there was not enough evidence on hand "to warrant immediate acceptance of that possibility". On November 5 the Chinese were in the field.

The failure of our "experts" to correctly collect and evaluate military information led eventually to the loss of thousands of lives. More blindness like that and our first lines of defense will no longer be off the battlefield.